THE JOURNAL

OF THE

PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

NUMBER 13 OCTOBER 1987

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PACIFIC COAST NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

Founded 1915

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THE JOURNAL IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE PCNS. A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION INCLUDING PCNS MEMBERSHIP IS $7.50. SINGLE COPIES ARE $2.00.

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PCNS CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

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OCTOBER 28, 1987 - WEDNESDAY - 8:00 PM
TOPIC: A NUMISMATIC ADVENTURE IN LONDON
SPEAKER: STEPHEN M. HUSTON

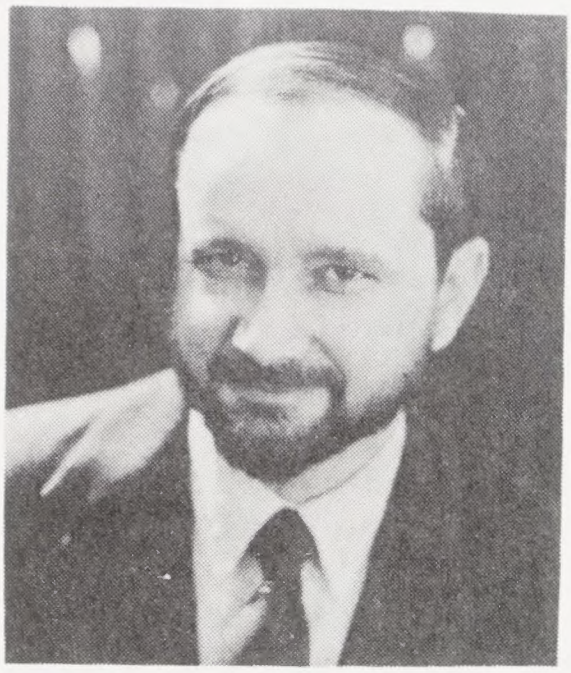
NOVEMBER 18, 1987 - WEDNESDAY - 8:00 PM
TOPIC: THE P.T. BARNUM OF NUMISMATICS: B. MAX MEHL
SPEAKER: DAVID W. LANGE

DECEMBER 30, 1987 - WEDNESDAY - 8:00 PM
CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR PARTY

MONTHLY MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE TELEPHONE MUSEUM, 1145 LARKIN STREET AT BUSH, SAN FRANCISCO. GUESTS ARE INVITED.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by David F. Cieniewicz



As this issue of THE JOURNAL goes to press, another year is rapidly drawing to a close. I hope that numismatically it has and will continue to be a very rewarding year for all our members. This being my final president's page, I would like to personally thank the officers, board and committee members, and the rest of the membership for their total support, especially during 1987. I have enjoyed and appreciate the honor of serving as president of PCNS and look forward to supporting the future officers and committees whenever possible.

The nominating committee will be announced at the October meeting. I hope that numerous members will come forward and assist in administering our organization during the coming year.

Numismatics is supposed to be a leisurely pastime, however, sometimes it takes pure endurance to stay with our hobby. Obstacles such as market conditions, availability, trends, fads, and grading standards coupled with grading services, to name just a few, often distort and confuse what is supposed to be an enjoyable interest. The tragedy is that these obstacles induce a fallout rather than a population growth among collectors.

Imagine the confusion and fear that could be instilled into a potential collector, particularly a child. Although there doesn't seem to be a simple solution to these problems, a temporary relief might be touch! When is that last time you handed a child a worn Indian cent or intrigued a coworker with a common variety of an ancient coin? The monetary value of these pieces may be modest, but they might yield a lifetime of enjoyment to a future numismatist.

I strongly encourage everyone to inspire potential and new collectors and invite them to future PCNS meetings.

Dave

THE COINAGE OF GREAT BRITAIN

by Matthew V. Rockman

Ever since the dark ages of Europe, and even before, in ancient Greece and Rome, people have needed a means of exchanging one item for another. At first, it was simple; "you give me some cotton, I'll give you some corn." Slowly, it developed; "give me a cow, I'll give you a wife." Over the years, people became annoyed. Cattle became harder and harder to carry around. Of the many alternatives, the world turned to coins. First, in the Kingdom of Lydia, then in Greece, the Roman Empire, Corinth and Carthage, Egypt and Athens, and over the nearly three thousand years since, coins have spread to most every nation upon the Earth. One of the stops along the way was the nation we know today as Great Britain.

Our story begins in the year 1066, with the Norman Conquest. Many years before the Conquest, King Edward the Confessor was shipwrecked in Normandy, captured, and released only after he had promised the throne of Anglo-Saxon England to William, Duke of Normandy. However, upon Edward's death, a man named Harold Godwinson became king. William was mad, but not stupid. He took his time and built an army. At the same time, ironically, King Harold Harara of Scandinavia invaded the north of England, leaving the south open to William. Harold (Godwinson) was a good fighter, and having beaten Harold Harara's army, returned to London. Hearing of William in the south, he moved out to fight another battle. Unfortunately for Harold, William was rested and won the famous Battle of Hastings against Harold, for the last time ever, having conquered England. William was crowned king of a Norman England on Christmas day, 1066.

Coins in the day of William were much more difficult to produce than in today's automatic world. William's mintworkers had to make each coin by hand. First, the design was cut on a die. At the time of William, there were approximately seventy operating mints. The first mint worker would take a piece of silver and hammer it into a thin sheet. The next man would use a pair of shears and cut out flans from the sheet of silver. Workers placed the flans, one at a time, between two dies and pounded the top die with a hammer. The last step in the entire process was weighing the final products to make sure they had the proper silver content.

William's coins were issued in only one denomination, the penny, equal to four farthings or one twelfth shilling. They were issued largely for small trade and for payment of troops. The coin showed the king holding a scepter on the front; the reverse showed a variety of designs. The most common reverse type is with the letters PAXS (Peace) in the angles of a cross. The legend, the words on the coin, read PILLEMUS in crude, Anglo-Saxon Runic letters.

William the Conquerer
Silver Penny

William died in 1087, and his son William II (William Rufus) became King. His coins were the same as his father's; most could have been struck by either William.

At William II's death in 1100, Henry, another son of the conqueror, became King. He also issued just one denomination, the penny, in short-weight, base metal silver. The legend was changed to bear the name hENRICVS.

When Henry died, in 1135, the throne of England rightfully belonged to his daughter, Matilda. Matilda, however, was away from England at the time of her father's death, and the nobles and barons, not wishing to be ruled by a woman, gave the throne to Stephen, Matilda's cousin. Few coins, all rare, were issued during this reign that had Matilda's legends. Stephen's coins, minted in greater quantities, were much the same as the previous kings; his name was crudely lettered "STIEFNE" on his coins.

In 1154, Henry II was crowned king of England. Most of the coins of Henry II have a crosslets in the angles of a cross design on the reverse. This Cross and crosslets issue is better known as the "Tealby" coinage, since over five thousand pennies of this type were found at Tealby, Lincolnshire in 1807. In 1180, a new reverse type, showing a plain, short cross, replaced the Tealby issue.

Richard I became king in 1189, and is commonly referred to as "Richard the Lion Hearted." Richard spent his entire reign crusading in the Holy Land or fighting in Normandy, and Henry's short cross pennies were continued into this reign, even the "hENRICVS" legends were preserved.

King John, signer of the Magna Charta, succeeded Richard as King in 1199 and issued short cross pennies, also with Henry's legends. John was succeeded in 1216 by Henry III.

During the reign of Henry III there was a change in English coinage that, though seemingly very minor, was extremely significant.

Henry II
Short-Cross Penny

In the past, people had scraped off parts of the coins to accumulate silver in order to melt it down and cheat the next person. It was a common practice and made many people distrust coinage and consider only barter. Some coins were reduced to three-fifths of their weight by clipping. As you may remember, one side of the coin showed the king and the other side had a small cross on it. At this point, in 1247, some nameless person had the genuine idea to extend the cross on the reverse all the way to the edge of the coin. The cross, therefore, would allow people to see if their coins had been clipped and even to see who was doing the clipping, an offense punishable by the loss of all one's possessions and land. It is interesting to note that all short cross coins bear the name hENRICVS, the reigns of Henry II, Richard, John, and Henry II inclusive. In 1250, only the mints of London and Canterbury, as well as the ecclesiastical mints of Durham and Bury St. Edmunds remained active. Several years later, in 1257, Henry III issued a gold coin equal to twenty silver pence. It was not popular, being undervalued, and very few specimens have survived.

Another important change occurred when Edward I became king in 1272. Edward's was the first reign in which several denominations were issued. Silver farthings (quarter penny), halfpennies, pennies, and groats (four pence) were issued during his reign, all of the long cross type. Edward I was succeeded by his son, Edward II, in 1307. Edwards II's coins were almost identical to those of Edward I, as coins at the time did not distinguish between the first, second, or third. It is almost impossible to tell early Edwardian coins apart. The son of Edward II, Edward III, was crowned king in 1327.

Gold coinage, the next significant change, was firmly and permanently established under Edward III. The gold Florin, as well as the half florin (Leopard) and quarter florin (Helm), were all issued in 1344. None of these were very popular, and it was soon replaced with the noble. The gold "Noble," and half noble, were issued showing the standing King on a boat, with sword and shield on the obverse and an exceptionally decorative short cross design on the reverse. The quarter noble displayed a shield on the obverse and the same short cross design on the reverse. At the time it was issued, its value was six shillings, eight pence, and it's weight was reduced from 138 grains (1344-1346), to 128 grains (1346-1351), to 120 grains (1351-1377). Edward III's silver coinage is the same as that of his two predecessors, except for the new half-groat denomination.

Edward was succeeded in 1377 by his grandson, Richard II. Richard, and his successor in 1399, Henry IV, both continued the long cross denominations of farthings, halfpennies, pennies, groats, and half groats. In 1412, the weight of the noble was reduced by twelve grains and the penny by three grains. This was partly because of a scarcity of bullion, though largely to provide revenue for the King.

Richard II
Silver Groat

Henry V became King in 1413. His coinage was much like that of earlier Henrys and, like the Edwardian coinage, did not show whether the King was the first, second, third, and so on. The monarchs can be differentiated by minor variations in the portraits.

Henry VI became king after the death of Henry V in 1422. Privy marks first became prominent during his reign, and they allow the coins to be dated to within a year or so. Originally, privy marks had been used to show where the legend started, and now the mark changed every little while, allowing dating. Henry VI was the first king during the War of Roses, a sixty year war between the House of York and the House of Lancaster over posession of

the throne. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London for nine years, from 1461-1470, when Edward IV was made king. Edward issued all of the denominations issued by Henry. The penny was again reduced by three grains, to just over twelve grains. A new gold denomination, the Ryal, or ten shillings, as well as a half and quarter ryal, were issued. In 1464, the value of any nobles still in circulation was raised to eight shillings, four pence. Edward also issued a coin known as the Angel; it was a gold piece with the six shilling , eight pence value of the old noble but with St. Michael slaying a dragon on the front and a cross on a ship on the reverse. Edward was forced to flee to France when Henry was freed from the tower and returned to the throne. Coinage of Henry VI's second reign were the same as that of Edward IV, except that the ryal denominations were discontinued. This restoration lasted less than a year, however, when Edward returned from France and was crowned king once again.

Edward IV died in 1483, and Edward V, at age twelve, became king. The child reigned only a few weeks. before his uncle seized the crown and had him murdered. During this short time, a small amount of silver was coined and even some gold angels and half angels. Coins of this reign can be identified by the boar's head mint mark in the legend. All are quite rare. Edward's uncle then became King Richard III, and the long cross coins were continued through his reign. In 1485, the last great battle of the War of the Roses was fought on Bosworth Field in which Richard was killed and Henry VII was crowned King. English coinage was reformed under Henry VII. The gold sovereign, equal to twenty shillings, was first coined in the time of Henry. It bore a beautiful design of the enthroned king, and the reverse showed the royal arms in the center of a Tudor rose. Henry also issued a ten shilling ryal for a short period. The gold angel was re-styled and now showed St. Michael wearing Renaissance style armor. The testoon (shilling) of twelve pence was first issued in this reign. In the latter part of the reign, after the turn of the century, silver coins appeared with an amazingly realistic profile portrait of the King; it should be compared to the lifeless portraits that had been used for the previous several centuries. Henry VII died in 1509 and was succeeded by his son, Henry VIII. Silver coins were steadily debased during the reign of Henry VIII and eventually reached a point of three-fourths copper to one-fourth silver, earning Henry the nickname "Old Coppernose." Many changes in the gold

coinage took place in addition to debasement. In 1526, the value of the sovereign was changed to twenty-two shillings and the angel to seven shillings, four pence, while at the same time the fineness of the gold was reduced to twenty-two karats. Henry struck a new coin, the Crown of the Rose, valued at four shillings, six pence, but it was not successful; soon it was replaced with the crown of the double rose, valued at five shillings. Meanwhile, the value of the sovereign was again changed, this time to twenty-two shillings, six pence and the angel to seven shillings, six pence. Another new coin, called the George Noble, was issued and valued at six shillings, eight pence. "Old Coppernose" died in 1547.

Henry VIII
Testoon (Shilling)

Edward VI became king on his father's death. The first English coins to bear dates were issued during this period. The first crown denomination, or five shilling silver coin, was also issued under Edward. Other new denominations include the half-crown, sixpence, and three pence. The gold angel was revalued at ten shillings, and the sovereign was returned to the twenty shilling value. A new "Fine" sovereign was issued, at a thirty shilling value. During the reign of Edward, debased shillings continued to be issued, although they still showed the portrait of Henry VIII. In this way, the public blamed Henry VIII for the debasement, and Edward VI could continue to accumulate profits from the debasement. Pure silver coins were also issued, all with Edward's portrait.

Edward's sister, Mary, became queen when he died in 1553. For two years she ruled alone and, in 1554, was wed to Prince Phillip of Spain. Her coinage was first issued with her portrait alone but later bore portraits of her with her husband.

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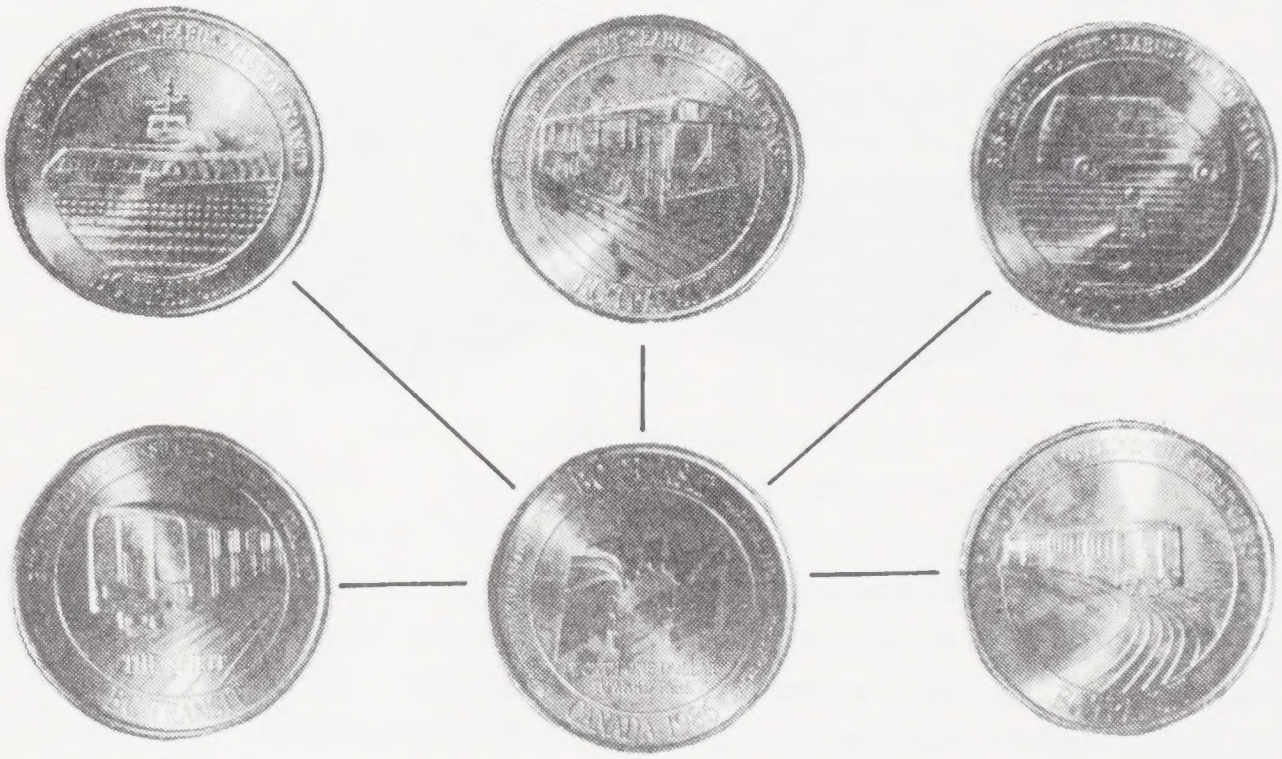
THE 1987 VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, TRANSIT TOKENS

by David F. Cieniewicz

On December 11, 1985, Vancouver, British Columbia, inaugurated its first rapid transit system. To commemorate the event, sets of tokens consisting of five tokens each were issued. The tokens were primarily intended for collectors, however they were valid for fares on any of the B.C. transit vehicles at a face value of $1. Additionaly, they were also valid in the ticket vending machines for fares on the Skytrain, Vancouver's above-ground transit system. In the latter part of 1987, the ticket vending machines will be converted to the new small-size Canadian dollar, resulting in the demise of this short-lived series of tokens.



Five different reverses depict the four B.C. transit systems services: SeaBus, Skytrain, Trolley Buses and Custom Wheelchair Transit Vans, in addition to a second Skytrain image to commemorate the new rapid transit opening. The common reverse depicts the stylized B.C. provincial flag, a Union Jack over a setting sun. The tokens were designed by Lisa Kozakewich of Design Group International. Engraved and struck by the Royal Canadian Mint, Winnipeg, the tokens were struck in brass, and are 25.8mm in diameter and 1.9mm thick with milled and serrated edges. The mintage is 48,000 uncirculated sets packaged in a heavy-gauge red and blue card sealed in vinyl. Additionally, 2,000 high-quality presentation sets housed in velvet cases were struck for presentation to visiting dignitaries during 1986.

Ref: B.C. Transit 1986 Commemorative Tokens Information Sheet

Photos by Stephen M. Huston of specimens from the author's collection.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES TO THE JOURNAL

THE JOURNAL is always seeking new manuscripts and letters from its readers. One need not be a member of PCNS to contribute.

Previously, guidelines for the submission of papers to PCNS were prepared with the requirements of the Annual Papers Competition in mind. As the winners of this competition are now chosen from material as published in THE JOURNAL rather than from the separate program used in past years, the current guidelines as published in Issue No. 9 of THE JOURNAL, reflecting the requirements of the Papers Competition, are herein expanded to more completely reflect the needs of THE JOURNAL.

All items submitted for publication in THE JOURNAL should be sent directly to the Editor. His address may be found on the inside front cover. Manuscripts should be double spaced and single sided only and must be typewritten. The deadline for submission of material to THE JOURNAL is the 15th of the month preceding the cover date. (Issues of THE JOURNAL are dated January, April, July, and October.)

Previously published works and those which are currently under submission to other publications will not be accepted. However, PCNS encourages the reprinting of articles in other publications subsequent to their appearance in THE JOURNAL. This privilege is granted with the provision that the editor's permission be obtained and that THE JOURNAL be credited as the original source of publication.

No restricitons are placed on the length of manuscripts and letters submitted to THE JOURNAL. However, the editor does reserve the right to edit such works as his judgement directs. Persons writing for THE JOURNAL are encouraged to provide suitable illustrations to accompany their manuscripts whenever possible. Photographic service is available and will performed at the editor's discretion, the cost being borne by PCNS. Numismatic items should not be sent to PCNS unless and until requested. All objects submitted for photographic work should be sent directly to the editor by registered mail and will be returned promptly. The sender will be reimbursed for this expense.

It is to be remembered that the above guidelines apply solely to the submission of material to THE JOURNAL and in no way alter the current rules of the Papers Competition as published in Issue No. 9.

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Edward's other sister, Elizabeth, became queen in 1558. Her coinage can be divided not by differences in design but by the methods in which they were struck. For a short period, coin-making machinery was introduced to the English mints. The presses were soon removed, however, due to the opposition of the workers, and coining returned to the hand hammering methods used since ancient times. New denominations from this period included the three-half-pence coin and the three-farthing coin.

Elizabeth was succeeded in 1603 by her distant cousin, James VI of Scotland, who became James I of England. At this time, the Irish harp and the Scottish rampant lion were added to the French fleur-de-lys and English lions in the coat-of-arms. James was the first of several rulers from the House of Stuart. James continued many of the denominations issued by Elizabeth including crown and half-crown but discontinued the groat, three-half-pence, and the three-farthing piece. James also added the Rose-ryal which was first valued at thirty shillings and later changed to thirty three shillings, the Spur-ryal, valued at fifteen shillings and later sixteen shillings, six pence, and the Thistle crown, valued at four shillings. Another coin, the angel, was valued first at ten shillings and in 1612 was revalued to eleven. In addition to the twenty shilling sovereign, other twenty shilling denominations, the Unite and the Laurel were also issued. In 1613, James granted the right to coin copper farthings to Lord Harrington. This privilege was later taken over by the Duke of Lennox.

James I
Gold Half-Laurel

Charles I came to the throne in 1625. He declared he would defend "the Protestant religion, the laws of England, and the liberties of Parliament." This phrase

appears on many of his coins. During Charles' reign, a silver one pound coin was issued, the only time such a coin was issued. Charles also issued a massive gold coin called the "Triple unite;" it was valued at sixty shillings. There were many fine examples of machine-made coins at this time struck under the supervision of French die-sinker, Nicholas Briot. Unfortunately, they could not be created at sufficient speed to replace the hammered coinage. Civil wars broke out during Charles I's reign, and coinage-of-necessity was struck by the beseiged towns of Newark, Pontefract, and Scarborough. During these civil wars, fifteen other cities under control of the King also struck coins of Charles I. Charles was persecuted and beheaded in 1649.

England became a Commonwealth at that point. The inscriptions on the coins of the Commonwealth were in English rather than in Latin, the language in which all legends had been written before then. For the most part, the coins of the Commonwealth were issued showing the shield of St. George on the front and the shield of Ireland and the shield of St. George on the back. For a period from 1653 to 1658, Oliver Cromwell had himself proclaimed Lord Protector. During that period, some coins were issued bearing the shields of the Commonwealth while others bore the portrait of Cromwell. Cromwell stuck a twenty-shilling gold coin called the "Broad," as well as a gold fifty-shilling coin.

In 1660, Charles II restored the monarchy after he was released from the Tower of London where he had been held since the establishment of the Commonwealth. In 1662, the hand-hammering method of making coins was abandoned in favor of machinery. Improved mill- and screw-presses made this possible. As a safeguard against clipping, the larger coins were made with the edge-inscription DECVS ET TVTAMEN (an ornament and a safeguard) as well as the regnal year. Charles II's twenty-shilling gold piece was called the "guinea" because the gold was imported from Guinea by the Africa Company. The badge of the Africa Company was the "Elephant and Castle," a symbol that appears on many of Charles II's coins. The king also struck a large five-guinea piece valued at one hundred shillings. In 1672, the government took over the authority to coin copper and tin. Copper half-pennies and farthings were struck, as well as tin farthings with a copper plug in the center.

During Charles II's reign, the first Maundy sets were issued. Maundy sets are specially prepared one-,

two-, three- and four-pence coins to be given out to the poor of London each year on Maundy Thursday. Not many sets are issued, and they are popular collectors items. They have been issued by every monarch since, with the exception of Anne. Charles' coins were also the first to show Brittania since the ancient Roman occupation of Britain. This personification of the nation was shown seated next to a shield. Brittania has appeared on all low denomination coins since then.

James II became king after Charles' death in 1685. His ascension was met with a lot of opposition, as James was a staunch Roman Catholic and the people preferred a Protestant king. James was overthrown in 1688 in the "Glorious Revolution." Coins issued during his three-year term show his bewigged bust on the obverse and four crowned shields radiating out from a central point on the reverse. All genuine tin coins of this period have a copper plug.

The throne was then offered to Mary II and Prince William of Orange, leader of the "Glorious Revolution," as a joint reign. The rampant lion of Orange was added as the centerpiece to the royal coat-of-arms. At the beginning of their reign, the guinea was revalued at twenty-one shilling, six pence; by 1694, the same coin was valued at thirty shillings. Also in 1694, the tin half-pennies and farthings were replaced by copper ones. The joint reign lasted until Mary's death in 1694 at which point William continued to rule alone as King William III. With a great recoinage in 1696, the hand hammering of coins came to a permanent end. All the coins still in circulation were called in to be restamped; some dated back to the time of Edward VI. Branch mints were established at Bristol, Chester, Exeter, Norwich, and York to help speed the recoinage. On all silver coins, the initial of the mint was added as a "mint mark" under the portrait of William III.

Mary's sister, Anne, became Queen in 1702 after William died from a fall from his horse. Many coins of Anne's reign had the word "VIGO" printed under her portrait, commemorating the British capture of the Spanish port of Vigo along with the many galleons and their cargoes of treasures. Coins with the VIGO inscription were struck from captured silver. In 1707, the unification of England and Scotland, existing since the time of James I, was made official. The arrangement of the shields on the reverses of Anne's coins was changed to allow more space for the Scottish Lion. Anne was the last Stuart monarch.

Anne
VIGO Half-Crown

Anne died in 1714, making James III, son of the second James, rightful heir to the throne. However, James was a Catholic and, fearing an outburst of war, the nobles chose George Louis, King of the German province of Hannover, to be the next king of Great Britain. When George arrived in London in late September, 1714, it was only his second time in Great Britain. His coins showed his English titles on the obverse, his German titles on the reverse. Coins of this reign marked SSC between the shields on the reverse were minted from silver provided by the South Sea Company. Similarly, those with roses and plumes between the shields of the reverse show the silver was from the Company for Smelting Pit Coal and Sea Coal. Coins marked WCC under the King's bust indicates the bullion was supplied by the Welsh Copper Company. The coins of George I and his four successors have the shield of the Duchy of Brunswick and Luneberg added to the arms. In 1718, George issued a quarter guinea, but it was inconveniently small, so the issue was soon discontinued.

In 1727, George II succeeded his father as king. The new king first issued, until 1740, coins of himself as a young man. From 1740, until the end of his reign in 1760, they showed him as an older man with a flowing white wig. In the late 1740's, coins were issued with "LIMA" under George's head on many gold and silver coins in the same manner VIGO had been inscribed on those of Anne. This celebrated the successful expedition of Admiral Anson for his 1740-1744 circumnavigation and his seizure of treasures from Lima, Peru.

George II died in 1760, and his grandson, George III, was crowned king. George III reigned for sixty years, one of the longest reigns in British history and one of the most interesting for coinage. George's lengthy reign would be very difficult to portray chronologically, so instead I will go about it by metal (gold, silver, copper). George's non-pattern gold coins were in the

denominations of guinea, half-guinea, third-guinea, quarter-guinea, sovereign, and half-sovereign. The early gold coins (1762-1813) showed nine different portraits of the king. These coins consisted only of the guinea, its half, third, and quarter. The quarter guinea of George III was issued in 1762, the only time except the 1718 issue of George I. In the years 1768, 1770, 1773, and 1777, pattern five guinea and two guinea coins were struck. All are extremely rare. In 1816, the mint moved from the Tower of London to Tower Hill. Along with the move came new, steam-powered machinery made by Boulton and Watt (inventor of the steam engine). The machines made possible new coins that were technically much superior to the old milled coins.

The later gold coinage (1817-1820) included sovereigns and half-sovereigns, showing only one type of portrait. This sovereign was the first British coin to bear Benedetto Pistrucci's famous interpretation of Saint George slaying a dragon.

Silver was issued even more sporadically than gold. These irregular issues included the "Northumberland" shilling of 1763 and Maundy sets with dates of no predictable pattern. In 1797, a severe silver shortage forced the Bank of England to purchase Spanish pieces-of-eight. These were then countermarked with a tiny image of George III in an oval frame and valued at four shillings and nine pence. Later, the portrait of George III was placed in an octagonal frame and the value of the coin went to five shillings. Spanish four reals were also countermarked. In 1804, The Bank of England decided to restamp some coins with marks covering the entire coin. They worked so well, one could scarcely tell they were once foreign. These new coins, known simply as " Bank Dollars," showed George's redesigned portrait on the front. The reverse showed Brittania seated inside a wide oval band with a crown on top. It reads very simply: "BANK OF ENGLAND - FIVE SHILLING - DOLLAR." The crown over Brittania appears to be made of brick, supposedly to reassure people of the strength of the Bank. These coins were struck until 1811 but all showed the original date of 1804. From 1811 to 1816, the Bank also struck "official" token coins in three-shilling and eighteen pence denominations.

With the introduction of new stamping machinery in 1816, crowns and half-crowns were produced again along with coins of smaller denominations.

Copper coinage of George III's reign was first issued in 1770. These half-pennies and farthings showed simply George's bust on the front, Britannia on the reverse. Unfortunately, counterfeiters found it simple as well and, by the end of the 1770's, over half of the copper coins in circulation were counterfeit. Many of these illegal coin-makers circumvented the law by changing the legend in often humorous ways. For instance, instead of the word "Britannia" accompanying the figure on the reverse, one coin had "British Girls." The last official coins of this type were issued in 1775.

Without the continued minting of new copper coins, shortages began to appear. To make up for the lack of small change, many companies, following the example set by the Parys Mine Co., began issuing private tokens. At first they were used as advertisement for the issuing company, but over time they were circulated extensively in lieu of legal tender. Thousands of different types of tokens were created.

In 1797, huge copper one- and two-penny pieces known as "Cartwheels" made their only appearance. Struck on an early steam press, these coins were so well made that counterfeiting them was thought impossible. These gargantuan pieces were quickly discontinued, since they were very difficult to carry around. Twice more, in 1799 and in 1806, copper coins were again struck. By 1811, the shortage of small coins was so great that tokens abounded for a second time. The end of the token issue came in 1813, by an act of parliament.

George III
Two-Penny Cartwheel

The end of an era came with the death of George III in 1820 -- no more would coinage be varied and irregular. The new King, GeorgeIV, had his father's odd appearance. All coins of this reign show the King's head on the

obverse, and either St. George, Brittania, a shield, or a lion on the reverse. George IV's was the first reign in which no silver pennies were struck for circulation, though limited numbers were struck for Maundy sets. Copper half-farthings and third-farthings were also struck for use in Ceylon and Malta, respectively. George's short reign ended in 1830.

The last Hannover, William IV, became King. Only a single set of designs served for William, in contrast to the variety used under the Georges. His crowns were issued only in 1831, and then the mintage was only 100 peices.

When William IV died in 1837, Queen Victoria, age eighteen, came to the throne. Victoria's sixty-three years as queen is the longest reign of any British monarch. Four distinct heads appeared on coins during her reign. On the first issue, lasting from 1837 to 1887, a young head appeared on designs much like those of William IV.

In 1847, a crown piece was issued showing Victoria wearing a crown and with Gothic lettering on the legend. The florin, or two shilling piece, with a similar design, made its first appearance in 1849. This first florin was issued without the words "Dei Gratia", Latin for "By the Grace of God." It was known as the "Godless florin," and the missing words were added on all following issues.

Victoria
"Godless" Florin

In 1887, Victoria's third head made its appearance in commemoration of her fiftieth year as queen. This was the "Jubilee Type," portraying her as an older queen with a crown just resting on the top of her head and a veil dropping from the crown. During the jubilee period, several large silver pieces were issued, including the florin, the half-crown, the crown, and the double florin, equal to four shillings. In 1893, the last head type appeared, the "Old Head." All denominations were issued of this type, except the discontinued double florin.

Victoria died in 1901, and her son, Edward VII, became the next King of England. During his nine-year reign, Edward used only one set of designs. The only thing out of the ordinary was the florin, which showed Brittania standing, an interpretation that has not been seen again on British coins. The obverse of all his coins showed the King bareheaded.

Edward was succeeded in 1910 by his son, George V. Again, the obverse of all coins show the uncrowned head of the King. In 1919, due to the steep rise in the price of silver, .925 fine silver issues were discontinued in favor of .500 silver. In 1927, all new types were introduced. No crowns were struck for general circulation, though from 1927-1936, around Christmas time, small numbers were issued for people to give as gifts. In 1935, a crown piece was issued showing a modernistic interpretation of St. George and the Dragon. After 1935, the previously issued Pistrucci interpretation was used again. George V died in 1936.

Needless to say, British coinage did not end in 1936. However, a comprehensive study of British coinage could easily run hundreds of pages. So, for the sake of keeping this readable, I will not go any further.

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